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THE BALLOON AND PIGEON POSTS.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

WHEN the history of the siege of Paris comes to be written, one of the not least interesting chapters will be that on the manner in which the beleaguered city contrived to communicate with the outside world. That so vast a city should have been effectually blockaded for months by a hostile army, is an event all but unprecedented in history; but that its inhabitants should, in spite of the investing forces, have been able to keep up almost daily communication, on a large scale, with the other parts of the country, is still more unparalleled, and would have been impossible save for the rapid advances made in science of late years. Apart from military considerations altogether, the stubborn resistance which Paris has offered has been in no small measure owing to this facility of communication. Physical suffering of every description, when the mind is elevated by some noble sentiment, such as patriotism, can be, and often is, endured by masses of people without a murmur; but the mental anxiety consequent upon the complete isolation of thousands of human beings from all who are dearest to them, defies the calculations of the politician and the plans of the strategist, and unfits men for engaging resolutely in a struggle of any kind.

For such reasons, and for others more intimately connected with the defence of the city, the utmost efforts of the government, from the very commencement of the siege, were directed towards keeping up an efficient system of communication between Paris and the departments. Of course, the most natural mode of doing so, and the one which has been followed in other cases when a town has been besieged, is the sending of couriers through the enemy's lines. But this method, which is always attended with great risk, and more especially so in the present instance, where the investment has been so complete, has the further disadvantage that a courier can only carry a very limited number of despatches. This, however, was

the plan first tried by the authorities in Paris; and some few persons no doubt succeeded in passing the investing forces, although very many more were unsuccessful.

One of the earliest attempts of the kind was that of a courier employed by the *Daily News*, who, thanks to his being mounted on a fast horse, was fortunate enough to get through the lines, not only with letters but with several newspapers. Leaving the city on 20th September, he reached London on the 22d; and the *Daily News* was thus enabled to publish the next day letters from Paris up to the date of his departure, when all the other papers had been without news for more than a week. A few days after this, however, two Englishmen, who made an attempt to leave, and whose adventures have been described in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, after having been driven back at several points by the Prussian sentinels, more than once at the risk of their lives, were finally obliged to return to Paris. During the early part of October, several notable attempts at evasion occurred, and were all unsuccessful; indeed, persons managed to get through at all only during the early days of the siege, when the investment was not yet complete. Among these unsuccessful attempts may be mentioned those made by Captain Hoare, military attaché to the British embassy, and M. d'Aldama, an attaché of the Spanish embassy, who twice tried to escape, as also did Monsignor Chigi, the papal nuncio.

Meanwhile, the bureaux of the Paris post-office were overflowing with correspondence for the departments, which there did not seem the slightest chance of despatching. A day or two previous to the complete investment of the capital, a train with the mails had started on the Western Railway, but it was fired on by the enemy, and was compelled to return without having proceeded more than twenty miles from Paris. Another attempt was made by the post-office to send out the mails in carriages drawn by fleet horses; but more than half of these came back to the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau pierced with bullets; the remainder falling, it is supposed, into the hands of the enemy.

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Such was the state of affairs when Nadar, the well-known photographer and aéronaut, turned his attention towards inaugurating a system of postal balloons. Previous to the commencement of the siege, he had been requested by General Trochu to furnish a Report on the uses to which balloons might be put for the defence of the city. In this Report, with the approval of several of the commandants of the forts, he advocated the formation of a corps of military aéronauts, and the establishment of captive balloons at some half-dozen of the extreme points of the line of defence. The idea was by no means a novel one. Balloons had, to a certain extent, been employed for military purposes both during the Italian war and the civil war in America; but their first application to such an object dates from many years previous to these. In 1792, the Committee of Public Safety, on the proposal of Guyton de Morveau, created a company of military aéronauts, which rendered such signal services that a second one was soon formed, and a special school of military aérostics established at the château of Meudon. But this corps was not destined to have a very long existence, a somewhat singular incident causing its abolition during the first Empire.

At the coronation fêtes of Napoleon I., a fire-balloon sent up from the Place de la Concorde in Paris, with the imperial cipher and crown attached, fell early the next morning at Rome, where the crown caught in, and remained fastened to, the tomb of Nero (or at least to the building commonly designated as such), whilst the casing of the balloon and the netting fell into Lake Bratiano. The crown of Napoleon I. hooking itself on to the tomb of Nero did not escape the caricaturists of the period, and pen and pencil were so mercilessly plied, that, in spite of the valuable services which the balloon corps had already rendered, and of the future uses to which it might be put, Napoleon I., who, on the first receipt of the intelligence, had manifested much ill-humour, decreed its abolition.

At the commencement of the present struggle, attempts were made by the French aéronauts, but without success, to induce the Ministry of War to consent to the re-establishment of this corps; and in the early part of August, M. Gaston Tissandier and others applied to be allowed to accompany the army with a captive balloon. They proposed that they should be attached to the staff, as was the case with the aéronauts under the first Republic, and should report the movements of the enemy's troops going on at a distance, behind hills, woods, &c.; but although the usefulness of such an aerial observatory for military purposes had already been fully demonstrated, the Ministry of War did not even think fit to vouchsafe a reply to the men who were willing to place their lives and their services at the disposal of their country.

Treated at first with similar neglect by the government of National Defence, M. Nadar, as we have already stated, had turned his attention towards organising a system of postal balloons, and for some time his report to General Trochu was lost sight of. At length, however, when the Germans had captured the plateau of Châtillon, and defeated the French at Le Bourget, both of which disasters might have been prevented by a proper system of aerial observation, Nadar was directed to carry out his project, and on 19th November successfully inaugurated a captive balloon near

Point-du-Jour, worked by sailors and *gardes-forestières*.

The first postal balloon, somewhat inappropriately named *Neptune*, freighted with numerous copies of M. Jules Favre's report of his interview with Count Bismark at Ferrières, and a considerable number of letters, was despatched on its aerial voyage early on the morning of the 23d September, from the Place de Saint-Pierre, at Montmartre, where M. Nadar, even at that early period of the siege, was making almost daily ascents on his own account in a large captive balloon. Between this date and the end of November, no less than thirty balloons left Paris, carrying on the average two passengers, from four to six hundredweight of letters, and a couple of pigeons. The *Neptune* having accomplished its mission successfully, as was ascertained by the return of the carrier-pigeons it had taken out, the government at once entered into a contract with M. Nadar for the despatch of a series of balloons under the direction of experienced aéronauts; and the *salle de bal* of the Elysée Montmartre was forthwith converted into an immense balloon factory, employing nearly a couple of hundred hands.

Nadar became the hero of the hour, for Paris must ever have a hero. Famous he had always been, but more for his eccentricity than anything else. His curious signature, which decorates his house on the Boulevards in letters some feet in height, his desertion of photography for ballooning, the immense losses he had suffered in endeavouring to solve the problem of aerial navigation, had all contributed to render him a favourite with the Parisians, and soon adventures rivalling those of the heroes of antiquity began to be related of him. A long account of how he had engaged in mortal combat with a hostile balloon went the round of the newspapers, and was universally believed, for nothing too extraordinary could be related of the man who in one way, at all events, was getting the better of the Prussians, and who, while they were anxiously guarding every outlet from the city on earth, was coolly despatching his messengers through the air, over their heads. About this time, the *Figaro* published some verses on him, from which we extract the following:

What a strange fellow is Nadar!
Photographer and aéronaut;
He is as clever as Godard.
What a strange fellow is Nadar!
Although, between ourselves, as far
As art's concerned, he knoweth naught.
What a strange fellow is Nadar!
Philosopher and aéronaut.

At Ferrières, above the park,
Behold him darting through the sky,
Soaring to heaven like a lark,
At Ferrières, above the park.

Whilst William whispers to Bismark:
'Silence! See Nadar there on high;
At Ferrières above the park,
Behold him darting through the sky.'

O thou more hairy than King Clodion!
Bearer on high of this report;
Thou, yellower than a pure Cambodian,
And far more hairy than King Clodion,
We'll cast thy statue in collodion,
And mount it on a gas retort!

An arrangement for the construction and despatch of postal balloons was also entered into with MM. Godard frères, the well-known aeronauts, and more especially for the manufacture of the kind termed *ballons-libres*, made of paper, and capable of carrying some fifty or sixty thousand cards, six and a half inches long by two and a quarter inches wide, bearing on one side a written communication, and on the other an address, and known by the name of *cartes-postes*. Similar balloons to these last had been sent out from Metz, with more or less success; but it is only during the siege of Paris that they have been employed on a large scale. The charge for the transmission of the cards to any place in France was one penny each. The writing on every card was read by one of the post-office officials before it was allowed to leave, in order to make certain that it contained no information likely to be of service to the enemy; and these balloons were only sent up when the wind was in a decidedly favourable direction, so as to obviate as much as possible the risk of their being captured. A regular system of 'look-out' for them was organised in the departments; and on their descent, they were taken to the mayor of the commune in which they fell, he being charged with the conveyance of their cargo to the nearest post-office. However, when the departure of the ordinary balloons, or *ballons-montés*, as they were termed, had become a regular institution, this other mode of communication seems to have been discontinued. At the best of times, it was never a very sure one, and the chances of its success daily became diminished by the Germans constantly increasing the area they occupied around Paris.

Shortly after the departure of the *Neptune*, M. Gaston Tissandier left Paris in the *Céleste* balloon with a cargo of twenty thousand letters; and in spite of the volleys with which he was greeted whenever he approached any bodies of the enemy's troops, succeeded in descending safely in Normandy, whence the letters were despatched to their destinations. From his own account of the journey, published in the *Moniteur*, we learn that the director of the post-office, even at that early period, expressed himself as being perfectly satisfied with this novel system of communication. 'It is,' he said, 'the most economical we have ever employed. A calico balloon of two thousand cubic metres costs five thousand francs. With two men, it will carry easily four hundred kilogrammes of letters, weighing four grammes each, or one hundred thousand letters in all. These, at twenty centimes apiece, bring to the post-office twenty thousand francs as postage, or four times the value of the conveyance in which they leave Paris.'

From these remarks, we see that the balloons were not made of silk, but of calico, which being covered with two or three coats of a varnish of linseed oil and oxide of lead, was found to answer equally well. The balloons used to start originally from the Place de Saint-Pierre, at Montmartre; afterwards, as a matter of convenience to M. Nadar, their place of departure was altered to the Place de la Concorde; and finally, in order to avoid as much as possible the chances of their coming into contact with buildings on first rising, to the Orleans and Northern Railway stations—the former of which was assigned to MM. Godard, the latter to M. Nadar, and afterwards to MM. Yon and Dartois, who succeeded him in the management of

his company. The two railway stations were turned into balloon factories on a large scale, the *salles des bagages* forming the workshops, the offices, the storerooms; and the stations proper the places where the balloons were varnished, and then left, half-filled, to dry. Those manufactured at the Northern Station were white in colour, and were sewn by machinery; the others were yellow, and were sewn by hand. They were all filled with the gas used for lighting the streets. It was estimated that each of these factories was capable, if required, of turning out a new balloon daily.

Successful as the postal balloons soon became, there was still one drawback to communication with the provinces. Although balloons could leave Paris daily, if necessary, none could hope to re-enter it; for the problem of making a balloon travel in any given direction had not been solved; nor, in spite of the labours of the commission established at Tours by the Ministry of Public Instruction, and consisting of the aeronauts who had escaped from Paris, did there seem much chance that it would be. The postal administration was at its wits' end. Thousands upon thousands of letters were daily arriving at Tours with directions on the envelopes that they were to be forwarded to Paris 'by first balloon,' and there was not the slightest prospect of forwarding even one of them. As a last resource, endeavours were made to send couriers into the city, just as attempts had been previously made to send them out of it; but out of eighty who started, only four succeeded in passing the German lines, and these carried nothing but official despatches. In fact, it is calculated that, during the first week in October, when several of them were captured, over two thousand letters fell into the hands of the enemy.

Meanwhile, Paris was just as eager to receive letters from the provinces as these were to send them; so the *Figaro*, always anxious to make a coup, announced one day, in an article signed by its editor, M. de Villemessant, that it had discovered a plan by which the wishes of the Parisians might be gratified, provided only an intelligent man with good references could be found to carry it out. After some delay, the right sort of man seems to have been found, and it was then announced in the journal in question that any one who sent a light unsealed letter to the office, accompanied by a remittance of five francs, might calculate upon receiving a reply in about a week or ten days after the approaching departure of the courier, who was to take with him a couple of hundred tiny letters which would go into a very small compass, and thus be easily concealed. In the event of his getting through the German lines, he was to post these letters, after inserting in each of them a slip of paper with the address at which he would await a reply by return of post, and these replies he was to convey back to Paris. In view of his arrest by the enemy's sentinels, he was to be furnished with a large card on which was a statement in German to the effect that he desired to be taken before an officer. On the back of the card was a pathetic appeal, also in German, stating the object of his mission, and begging that, for the sake of their own wives and children, the enemy would allow him to proceed.

The *Figaro* was so virulently attacked by certain of its contemporaries in consequence of these proposals, that it had to abandon its scheme; but the

post-office authorities having intimated that they were not opposed to it, as the letters would require to be posted after they had been conveyed through the German lines, it was taken up in other quarters, and several couriers were despatched with varying success. One of these was an energetic woman of Polish birth, imbued, on account of her origin, with the most intense hatred towards Prussia and Russia, and who had already given several proofs of her intrepidity during the Polish insurrection of 1863. She managed to pass through the German lines more than once; but at last, one morning, was dangerously wounded while attempting to evade the enemy's sentinels at the bridge of Courbevoie, and had only just sufficient strength left to be able to drag herself out of range, when she was perceived by some Mobiles, who conveyed her to an ambulance. Among the successful attempts to enter Paris must be chronicled one made by a courier of the *Journal des Débats*, who swam the Seine with his despatches, and another by the government courier, who brought the intelligence of the battle of Coulmiers and the recapture of Orleans by the French.

One result of the *Figaro's* article was, that a number of persons started up proposing to carry out its plan, but intending really to put money into their own pockets by preying upon the susceptibilities of their fellow-prisoners in the capital. The usual method was to demand a certain sum for the carriage of the letter and its reply, engaging to return half in the event of non-success. This half was always religiously refunded, the letters, of course, never being sent at all, and the ingenious speculator clearing a handsome profit on the transaction. One of these swindlers even went so far as to advertise that the replies for Paris were to be addressed to the Representative of the General Correspondence Company, Hôtel d'Angleterre, Tours, where, it is almost needless to say, there was neither any such representative nor any such hôtel.

As it daily became more evident that communication by means of couriers could not be relied upon even for government despatches, attention began to be directed towards the various proposals for making balloons proceed in any desired direction. There are many serious difficulties in the way of this, notwithstanding the numerous plans that have been brought forward. Many inventors, for instance, have proposed the application of various kinds of sails; but there is no such thing as wind so far as a balloon is concerned, for a balloon is so light, that it forms, as it were, a part of the air itself, and a lighted candle placed in the car of one would not gutter. For similar reasons, most of the propellers hitherto proposed would be useless.

M. Dupuy de Lôme, who, as chief constructor of the French navy, had revolutionised the construction of vessels of war by the introduction of iron-clad ships, and who for many years had made a special study of the subject of aerial navigation, had, however, devised a plan which, in theory at least, seemed likely to yield the desired result. This plan, which received the approval of the Academy of Sciences, and towards the carrying out of which the government granted him the sum of forty thousand francs, consists in making the balloon ovoidal in shape, and furnishing it at one end with a sail worked by ropes, to be used as a rudder, and

with a screw as a propeller, by means of which it is hoped to attain a speed of from four to seven miles an hour. The car is suspended from a rod which projects from each extremity of the balloon; and the screw, which is to be worked by hand, turns round a horizontal axis, and has blades formed of ribs of wood covered with silk. In order to avoid loss of ballast and gas in ascending and descending, M. Dupuy de Lôme has placed in the lower part of his balloon an apparatus resembling the bladder of a fish, and consisting of a kind of bag into which a pump can compress air when it is necessary to increase the weight of the balloon, while a valve allows the same air to escape when it is required to lighten it. On attaining an elevation of one thousand yards or over, it would, however, be necessary to allow a little gas to escape, on account of the dilatation of the balloon, caused by diminished atmospheric pressure. These arrangements will allow of this kind of balloon rising and sinking many times in succession, if required. It is proposed to navigate it in the following manner. On starting, the aeronaut would abandon the balloon to the wind, and by aid of a plumb-line observe what direction it is taking over the earth, marking this direction upon a map which he carries with him. He would then trim his sail at its greatest angle, and observe the new direction taken by the balloon. This drawn upon the map will make a certain angle with the original direction. If the place at which he wishes to arrive lies outside this angle, it would be useless for him to continue his voyage; if within it, a few trials will indicate the precise angle for the rudder. As already observed, this plan, theoretically speaking, seems feasible enough; but although the balloon has been constructed, no effort appears to have been made to give it a trial, on account, one source of information says, of M. Dupuy de Lôme's disinclination to trust himself to the mercy of his own invention.

Various other kinds of navigable balloons were proposed, some similar to the one described above, but with gas or steam engines to work the screw, to which the danger from fire was very justly objected; and others with wings or several screws; but none of them appear to have been constructed, nor, on the whole, do they seem to have been so carefully designed as M. Dupuy de Lôme's.

Curiously enough, this gentleman had scarcely published his plans when General Morin announced that there had just been discovered, in the archives of the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers, an unpublished manuscript of Monge, dated 1783, in which this celebrated mathematician explains a plan for causing balloons to ascend or descend without the loss of ballast or gas, and very similar to that proposed by M. Dupuy de Lôme; thus affording a striking confirmation of the correctness, in any case, of a portion of this gentleman's views.

So confident did the public soon become in the success of navigable balloons, that companies began to be formed for the construction of several capable of carrying a number of passengers, and for organising regular departures for the provinces, with return journeys to Paris. But notwithstanding all these schemes, notwithstanding the proposals to employ balloons guided by eagles, and the submarine boat, drawn by gudgeon, and escorted by carp, which a satirical writer recommended to the attention of inventors, letters from the departments became more and more rare in Paris. However,

the balloon voyages from the city continued to be conducted with great success; and there was so much anxiety to escape by this means, even at the extravagant prices demanded for a passage, that, from the beginning to the middle of October, no less than four thousand applications for permission to leave were received by the government; and as these were increasing in number every day, it was found necessary to issue definite rules for regulating the departures. By these rules, it was ordered that no person should be allowed to leave by balloon unless he had received the authorisation of the Minister of the Interior, countersigned by the Governor of Paris, or the authorisation of the latter countersigned by the former; and, in addition to these two signatures, he was required to obtain the *visa* of the Minister of Finance, as representing the post-office. At the same time, it was ordered that no balloon should carry with it any journals which had not been duly *estampillés* at the hôtel of the Governor of Paris and the Ministry of the Interior.

Advertisements of balloon passages at fixed rates (generally about two thousand francs) soon began to appear in the newspapers; but sometimes the rate was not given at all, and the advertisement would conclude: 'For freight or passage, apply — rue —;' as though it had reference to the sailing of a ship. Owing to the difficulty of obtaining places in the balloons, two merchants of Bordeaux even went so far as to employ MM. Godard to construct one expressly for themselves, and early one morning safely left in it from the Orleans Railway Station, carrying with them a sailor as *aéronaut*, another passenger, as well as some pigeons and a large number of letters.

Probably the most exciting balloon voyage of all, and certainly the one of greatest moment to France, was that of M. Gambetta. For fully a week did this energetic statesman have to wait for a favourable opportunity of starting. Morning after morning, the Place de Saint-Pierre at Montmartre was thronged by people eager to witness his departure, and morning after morning pilot-balloons were sent up, in order to ascertain the direction of the aerial currents; but the wind kept persistently in the west, and would probably have carried the balloon into the parts of France occupied by the enemy, and possibly into Germany itself, had the attempt been made to ascend. At length it changed to the south-east; and at eleven o'clock on the morning of October 7, M. Gambetta, accompanied by his secretary and the *aéronaut* Trichet, ascended in the *Armand Barbès*, carrying with him an immense quantity of letters and several pigeons. At the same time and place, another balloon, the *Georges Sand*, also ascended with two American gentlemen, the *sous-préfet* of Redon, in Brittany, and an *aéronaut*.

They had scarcely cleared Saint-Denis, when the two balloons were assailed by volley after volley from the Prussian outposts, shells at the same time being fired into the air, with the view of bursting them; but although the travellers could hear the whistling of the bullets about their heads, luckily neither of the balloons was struck. This danger had no sooner been escaped, when, owing to some accident, the *Armand Barbès* began to fall rapidly, and took the ground in a field at a short distance from one of the German posts. Ballast being thrown out, it rose again some two hundred yards

or so, at which height it passed over a body of the enemy at Creil, who, luckily for the travellers, had their arms piled, and by the time they had seized them, the balloon, by dint of throwing out more ballast, had been made to rise considerably, but not with sufficient quickness to avoid the bullets altogether, some of which pierced it, while one grazed M. Gambetta's hand. Shortly after this narrow escape, the balloon was again exposed to a volley from a German encampment, but this time got off safely; and finally, about three o'clock in the afternoon, caught in some trees near Montdidier. But even then the dangers of the travellers were not all over; for the country people, mistaking them for Prussians, ran up to the spot and threatened them with summary punishment. M. Gambetta, however, reassured these mistaken patriots by displaying the tricolour flag, and shouting *Vive la République*; and a gentleman of the neighbourhood, who happened to be driving past, coming to the assistance of the Minister and his companions, they managed to secure what bags of letters remained, for several had been thrown out in their efforts to avoid capture, and by his aid were enabled to reach Amiens the same evening, where they met their fellow-travellers in the *Georges Sand*, which had fallen about the same time near Roye, in the department of the Somme.

Meanwhile the Parisians were terribly anxious as to the fate of the Minister, for they had been able to see that something was wrong with the *Armand Barbès* when it began to be lost to view. The next day, some of the pigeons from each of the balloons returned to Paris, but without any despatches; and it was not until the third day after his departure that a pigeon arrived with a despatch announcing Gambetta's safe descent. About this time, the balloons followed one another in such quick succession—among them the *Lafayette*, which carried no less than one hundred thousand letters and thirty pigeons, the *Liberté*, the *Godefroy Cavaignac*, in which the Count de Kératry left, the *Guillaume Tell*, the *République Universelle*, with the delegate of the *préfet* of police as a passenger, and the *Jean Bart*, with M. Albert Tissandier—that it is estimated that in the course of three days more than one million letters were despatched from Paris by this means. The remarkable thing is, that all the balloons about this time succeeded in making their voyage without falling into the hands of the enemy, although more than one had to run the gantlet of their shot and shell. The *Victor Hugo*, however, had a very narrow escape of being captured by *aéronauts*, cargo and all. It left the Place de la Concorde at 11.35 A.M., on the 18th October, was assailed by a volley from the Prussians as it passed over Montmorency, to which it responded by throwing out a number of copies of Victor Hugo's proclamation to the German army, carried as ballast, which caused it to rise rapidly, and finally fell at Soissons, in territory occupied by the enemy. Fortunately, by the aid of some peasants, the *aéronaut* was enabled to conceal his despatches until nightfall, when they were removed to a place of safety. Another balloon, whose name is unknown to us, had the misfortune to fall just outside Paris, about one hundred yards from a German post, which, of course, at once commenced firing on the occupants. These, on endeavouring to escape, found themselves exposed also to the fire of the

French, who mistook them for Germans, and were finally compelled to throw themselves down and simulate death, remaining thus nearly four hours in a cabbage-field, knee-deep with water. At night-time, however, they succeeded, after running many risks, in reaching a post of francs-tireurs, by whom they were conducted to Saint-Denis.

WON—NOT WOODED.

CHAPTER XVI.—‘MAN PROPOSES’—

‘THIS is the book you wanted, ma’am,’ said the book-stall keeper.

Mabel took it like one in a dream, and moved slowly towards the station door, whither a stream of people were already wending, full of talk.

‘Beg your pardon, miss,’ said a voice close to her ear; ‘but you have forgotten to pay for the volume.’

‘How very stupid of me,’ said poor Mabel, fumbling for her purse with trembling fingers.

‘Not at all, ma’am,’ said the stall-keeper, upon whom constant association with literature had worked its civilising influence, and whose wits exceptional opportunities for observation of mankind had sharpened to a fine point.

‘Parties often do forget who have just been seeing parties off by the train.’

Mabel blushed crimson as she paid the money, and hurried away—not back again to the hotel: to meet and have to converse with anybody, even with her sister, she felt was just now more than she could bear. If she could have reached her own room unobserved, she would have done so gladly; but there was risk of being interrupted on the way. She took a road that led out from the town to an unfrequented path along the cliffs. Her heart lay within her like a lump of lead, and her head was heavy too; but she walked very swiftly through dusty suburban streets, new built, and but half-finished; then along an open common, where the nursemaids, leaning on the perambulators which they pretended to push, turned round to gaze at her, and to interchange with one another meaning glances (it was clear to them that she had an appointment to keep with her ‘young man’); then over a low stile on to the cliff-path, where the sea-air came fresh and cool to her fevered forehead. At her feet, but far below, was the shore, with its knots of children, its shrimpers dredging in the sand, its searchers of the rocks and weeds; and the spa, with its groups of gaily dressed folks, listening to the band, the strains from which came faintly to her ear. She hastened on, and left all this behind her. Her one desire was to be alone—to be out of sight and hearing of all the world.

At last, she found a solitary spot, a grassy ravine, with a few sheep browsing on its sides, which looked up at her for a moment, more in wonder than in fear, and then recommenced their meal. The tinkle of their bells, as each slowly changed his feeding-ground, and the far-off murmur of the sea, just glinting through a narrow cleft, was all that was to be heard. The peace and quiet music of the scene helped on the tears of which she was in more sore need than ever was parched earth of summer rain; and here she sat down and shed them. She had shed tears before—what woman has not?—often: tears of childhood, dried

as soon as fallen by the kisses of beloved ones; tears of later years, that sprang unbidden to her eyes, when thinking of the mother she had scarcely known, and those impassioned ones which fell when ‘Ju.’ was taken from her, and the home that seemed no longer home without that sister’s face. But those were tears, and these were drops of gall. Ten days ago, she had seemed to herself the happiest of human creatures; and now, poor, simple soul, she deemed that she was sounding the very depths of human wretchedness: the sun had fallen from that blue heaven, and left all her life in darkness and eclipse for ever. ‘O Richard, Richard! why did you save me from the waves, to leave me thus forlorn and desolate?’ For she loved the lad with trustful heart; and somehow, though he had never told her so, or hinted at it by one look or gesture (save in that farewell pressure of her hand, which it was not in nature to withhold: how could he have taken it in his own, and held it there, and given it back again—the dearest thing in all the world—as though it had been a pebble or sea-shell?)—somehow, she knew that Richard returned that love. If she had listened to all his talk with Mr Flint, she could not have more accurately guessed how matters stood with him: that he was poor and proud, and had been hardly used; and that he had left her for the same reason that he had held his peace, and avoided her society to spare them both unfruitful sorrow, since neither pain nor patience could avail them. Mere sympathy and intuition had told her much of this, and the rest had been supplemented for her by her sister and Mrs Marshall, though they little guessed what knowledge they were imparting. Even Ju.’s loving eye had failed to discern the impression which Thornton had made on her sister’s heart, though (as we have seen) she had perceived that he himself was smitten by her darling’s charms; and as for Mrs Marshall, she could not imagine that any girl, however young, could ‘think seriously’ of a nameless, fortuneless lad like Thornton, when Winthrop of Wapshot and Son were so evidently regarding her with favour. But both ladies had spoken of Richard’s modesty and right feeling in terms which had early opened Mabel’s eyes to the true state of the case, and, to say truth, had prevented her from fretting, as she had done at first, at the young fellow’s supposed indifference to her; and now it would have been better far for her to have continued in that mistake, and to have fretted on.

She saw herself back again at the rectory, laden with a secret that she dared not disclose; the only being in whom she could have reposed it hundreds of miles away in unknown China. She drew a picture in her mind, colourless and sombre, of the life that she must henceforth lead there. ‘The level waste, the rounded gray’ of country existence rose up before her from foreground to horizon, without one attractive feature; the dull dinner-parties to which she would now accompany her father, and afterwards entertain the company with a little music; the stately patronage—paid chiefly in the coin of croquet and afternoon tea—which she would receive at ‘the Hall,’ for the squire of Swallowdip was a great magnate, and his wife ‘my Lady’ in her own right; the tattle and small-talk in which, even of yore, it had been difficult to affect an interest, and which would now (she felt) be insupportable. Lastly, there were her home duties; the attention

to her father's needs, which, indeed, were few enough (he was a bluff, healthy man, who had rarely known sickness, and of a nature disinclined to sentimental 'fal-lal' of all kinds; he liked his pipe, and to be let alone); the visiting and tendance of the poor; the teaching in the girls' school; the practising in the village choir. In these duties, in the more energetic performance of them, she would endeavour to forget—no, that was impossible—but to mitigate the past. Time would heal, perhaps, even this deep and gaping wound, and loving Duty would be its best ally. It might be so; but in the meantime this foreshadowing of her future was so dark and depressing, that like a sick man, whose malady has long to run, she turned from the contemplation of its course to the sharp, present pain, as almost a relief. She reviewed all that had taken place within those last few days, the incidents of which so outweighed all others within her smooth experience that they seemed to comprise her life. Father, and sister, and home were on one side of an imaginary equator, and on the other was her lover. She called up every circumstance connected with her brief acquaintance with him, and lingered over them as a child might do over the contents of her little jewel-drawer—worthless in others' eyes, but beyond all price in hers. The glance with which he had looked up at her from his book, when they asked him the way to Anemone Bay, and the simple bow with which he had greeted her. Once more, she watched him toiling over the sandy hill with the cobble, and straining every nerve to be beforehand with the greedy waves; she felt again the warm clasp of his hand, as he assisted her into that little ark of safety; she heard his accents of contempt, as he addressed the morose Horn, and marked the obedience with which he had returned for him at her lightest word. She thought, with a flush of shame and indignation, that it might have been because he had misunderstood her relations with Mr Horn Winthrop, that he had rowed away without even waiting for her word of thanks; as it certainly was for that reason that he had forborne (as Mrs Marshall had openly hinted) to pay her any court while at the hotel. He would not intrude his attention, when it was obvious that others, or at least one other, infinitely more favoured by the gifts of fortune, were endeavouring to win her hand. An hour ago, she would have shrunk from taking such a view of the advances of Mr Winthrop or his son, but in this supreme moment, all things appeared to her in their true light. The refinements of convention were swept away. Alas! how falsely had he sung who said: 'Tis better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all.' How infinitely happier would it have been for her had she never come to Shingleton, to meet him whom she would never cease to mourn! The one thing that she yearned for now was to go home—not that home was dear to her as it had been, but because it would have nothing to remind her of Richard. Here, all was eloquent of a vanished joy; the very wind seemed laden with it, as it sighed on her wet cheeks, and the sorrowful monotone of the sea was, 'Richard, Richard!' She would get away from Shingleton at once, and at all events. How she was to effect this, what excuse she was to make for such an abrupt departure, was by no means clear to her; her father was expected on the ensuing Monday, and on the Thursday following, when the Pennants

departed for Hong-kong, she was to return with him to the rectory. Such were the present arrangements, which certainly seemed reasonable enough, and with which she would scarcely be permitted to interfere without good cause. True, she had only to make a *confidante* of Ju., and her sister would doubtless make all smooth for her; but had she a right to tell Ju., which, moreover, would involve her husband's being also told? Was not this secret of hers Richard's also? and, since he had only disclosed it to herself by accident—if he could have been said to have disclosed it at all—was it likely that he wished others to know of it? This made her pause in her resolve to quit the place. She would still be loyal to Richard, if she could be nothing else; and terrible as it would be to remain at Shingleton—for other reasons beside that he had been there, and was now to be there no longer—she was ready to endure it for his sake. Having come to this conclusion, she was about to rise and return to the hotel, when she heard footsteps behind her. Fearing that some traces of her late emotion might still be visible in her face, she waited until the new-comer should pass. The footsteps came nearer and nearer—then stopped. The man—for they were man's steps—was probably contemplating the landscape, which, at that spot, offered peculiar attractions.

'My dear Miss Denham, is it possible that I find you here!'

Mabel started to her feet, and met Mr Winthrop the elder, face to face. She was too angry to be embarrassed or distressed. The intrusion, so unwelcome and inopportune, appeared for the moment to her excited fancy to be intentional.

'I am afraid my coming upon you thus suddenly, Miss Denham,' said he with great respect, 'has alarmed you?'

'I am not at all alarmed,' returned she coldly; 'but of course I did not expect to see you here.'

'Nor I to see you. I am equally astonished with yourself, though, doubtless (as is only natural), better pleased. You do not intend, it seems, to honour the table-d'hôte with your presence to-day.'

'We dine in our own room, I believe.'

'I am sorry for it—especially sorry to-day—for a reason with which perhaps you are not unacquainted.' Mabel was gazing abstractedly at the little strip of blue sea that shewed itself through the gorge, and did not perceive the searching and suspicious glance with which these words were accompanied.

'I know no reason,' said she in quiet scorn, 'why to-day, more or less than any other day, our absence from the table-d'hôte should be regretted.'

'You seem piqued, Miss Denham. I am afraid that the departure of a certain young gentleman from *The Grand* to-day may'—

'I do not understand you, Mr Winthrop.' She turned upon him with flashing eyes and crimson cheeks. 'To whom do you refer, sir? Or rather, by what right do you venture to make such an observation?'

'Well, really, one has rights, I suppose, as a parent—since one has certainly wrongs enough. I was referring, of course, to the departure of my son Horn.'

'Is Mr Horn Winthrop gone then?' Her astonishment at this information was unmistakable, nor could she omit from her tone some indication of relief. 'There is nothing wrong, I hope,' added

she apologetically; 'no bad news, I mean, which has necessitated his departure?'

'No, no,' said Mr Winthrop gaily, his countenance, so far from displaying annoyance, evincing the utmost satisfaction; 'and if there were, Horn could bear it with great equanimity. He is a philosopher in his own way, and in return, demands occasionally philosophy in others. You must not judge him harshly, however; he has been a spoiled child all his life, but his faults are on the surface. —They are certainly *there*, you would say, Miss Denham? Well, well, I cannot deny it.'

'Indeed, Mr Winthrop, I was about to say nothing of the kind.'

'Then it was very good of you. Let me flatter myself that your forbearance was on my account. I am not blind, believe me, to my son's deficiencies and excrescences. He wants planing. He wants a number of remedies which I have never had the patience to apply; and now the poor fellow, so far as tone and manner are concerned, is past mending. He goes on his way, and I on mine. The world will be charitable to him, because he will be very rich; and, in the meantime, I have made him quite independent of me. I do not see him twice a year; and, to tell you the truth, he would not break his heart if we met even less often. He is not demonstrative in his affections; whereas I myself—— Here Mr Winthrop sighed heavily. 'Alas! I have been deprived by Providence of her who could reciprocate my love.'

Mabel knew what was coming now. Her heart beat violently within her; there was a sound in her ears as though the waveless sea had risen in storm. It was as vain for her to attempt to escape, as for the dove to flutter which finds itself already in the hands of its captor; yet she made shift to murmur that the hour was late, and she must return to the hotel.

'Permit me, my dear Miss Mabel, to be your escort.'

She rested her finger-tips upon the arm she could not decline, and they turned slowly homeward.

'I was about to confide to you,' continued Mr Winthrop in low broken tones, 'some sorrows of my own, with which I have, after all, no right to trouble you. I will pass them by, and speak at once upon a brighter topic—their possible solace. Miss Denham, you see before you a man whom the world would tell you is to be envied. The heyday of youth has indeed gone by with me, and yet, I hope, not youth itself. Even in years I am still a young man, and my heart is as young as ever; more tender, perhaps, than others which have not beat so long, since it has known what it is to suffer. You, my dear young lady, have happily been spared the knowledge of what it is to love and to lose; but I read in your eyes that you pity me.'

'Indeed, sir, I am very sorry for you,' said Mabel simply. She would have used the same tone and form of words if he had complained of headache.

'You are most kind,' said Mr Winthrop softly; 'and yet you can be kinder still, if you will: there is something which a man like me, forlorn, and desolate, and friendless, yearns for even more than pity. Would you find it impossible, dear girl, to love me, to be my wife?' He stopped, and looked fixedly at her; she raised her eyes, and met his glance with a courage for which she had not given

herself credit. Her voice was very distinct as she replied: 'Indeed, Mr Winthrop, it would be quite impossible. I am sensible of the honour you do me. I am aware that many girls, much more worthy,'—he smiled sadly, and waved his disengaged hand in deprecation; but she went on—'much better, wiser, abler than myself in every way, would gladly accept your offer. But I cannot do so.'

'That is enough, my dear Miss Denham,' answered Mr Winthrop gravely. 'Do not fear that I shall distress you by pressing a hopeless suit. At the same time, I honestly tell you that I am not utterly disheartened—man proposes, and God disposes, in all cases save one, where man proposes, and woman rejects. The matter is not, then, so definitely settled, and I do not feel that Providence is finally against me in this matter.'

'But indeed you may, sir,' said Mabel firmly, and perhaps somewhat piqued by the light manner beneath which the other strove to conceal a bitter chagrin. 'It is better to face the truth at once.'

'Yes; but that is not so easy for poor me as for you, Miss Mabel,' returned Mr Winthrop, forcing a smile—'yet for the present let it be so. You will forget my words and me, of course. Be it so. On the other hand, I shall never, never forget you. Some day, perhaps'—here he spoke with great impressiveness and quiet—'there may be a chance of proving my devotion, if not to you, at least to your interests. If I can do so, if by any means within my power I can do you service or pleasure, I pray you remember that I am actuated by friendship only (for that I trust you will permit me to entertain for you); I shall demand no guerdon beyond the gratification of assisting you. It will be a very great gratification; and yet that you may never need such aid will be my constant prayer.' He lifted her fingers to his lips, then replaced them on his arm; like one who, at a holy rite, handles some sacred vessel.

'Your generosity, Mr Winthrop, touches me deeply,' said Mabel in trembling accents; 'I did not expect—that is, I had no right'—

'Ah, you thought me a heartless, selfish, vain old fellow,' broke in Mr Winthrop with an attempt at gaiety. 'Well, well; you have learned to think better of me—that is something. Still, I have a little vanity, and I should not like it known, I may confess to you, that I have—that you have declined'— Here Mr Winthrop's ready tongue failed him in this delicate extremity.

'Your secret is quite safe with me, sir,' said Mabel earnestly.

They were once more on the common among the nursemaids, who exchanged with one another glances even more significant than before. Their intuitive perception, that Mabel had gone to meet her young man, was proved accurate, since here he was arm in arm with her. Their looks, which she had not noticed on the previous occasion, now seriously annoyed her; whereas Mr Winthrop was rather gratified with this mark of attention than otherwise. They had a habit, however, of bursting into open laughter immediately after the pair had passed, which was objectionable, since he could not but reflect that the sense of humour is sometimes tickled by the idea of disparity of age.

When they reached the suburbs, Mr Winthrop halted. 'Dear Miss Denham,' said he respectfully, 'I am about to make a remark, which, although rude, you must allow is at least an unselfish one:

would you not prefer to return to the hotel alone—I mean, not in my company?"

"Thank you; yes," said Mabel eagerly, to whom this idea had already presented itself; "that would be much better." Her fingers dropped from his arm; she felt that she ought to shake hands with him, were it but in sign of this final parting; but she thought of the last clasp which that hand of hers had felt and returned, and hesitated to offer it. Mr Winthrop, as though divining her objection, took off his hat.

"Good-bye, sir," said Mabel, not without a touch of kind feeling, such as every true woman feels in dismissing for ever the man who has offered himself to her in honour.

"Au revoir," said he, with a grateful look; then turned down a by-path that led to the sea-shore.

As Mabel hurried homeward, she regretted that he had used that phrase 'au revoir.' Still, he was that sort of man who habitually interlards French phrases with his speech, and might have meant nothing by it. He could not surely mean that after what had passed he would continue to meet her as before! Such a course of conduct would be most embarrassing, nay, unbearable.

Here was the hotel at last. What experiences had she undergone since she had looked upon it, scarce two hours ago!

The affable manager was in the hall as she passed through it. "Your sister," said he, with the bow on which he justly prided himself, "has been inquiring for you, madam, with some anxiety."

"Indeed!" said she. "I have been for a walk along the cliff-path, that is all."

"Nay, madam; I do not mean that she was anxious upon your account—nobody ever comes to harm at Shingleton, I hope; but a letter has come for you by the afternoon post, which I noticed was marked "Immediate."

The events of that eventful day, it seemed, were not yet ended.

CHAPTER XVII.—A TIFF AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

The word 'Immediate' frightened simple Mabel. She had lived far from the atmosphere where such electric disturbances as 'telegrams' are common things; and even a letter which demanded haste had its vague terrors. She was accustomed to do much of her father's letter-writing for him, for though a divine, he was a lazy man with his pen; but she had hardly any correspondents of her own. As she flew up-stairs to the sitting-room, all the personal thoughts which had so lately possessed her mind clean vanished, and their place was occupied with one apprehension: Had anything happened to Cousin Martha Barr? This relative of the Denham family was a lady of advanced years and scanty means, who had always been a great favourite with the two sisters, but especially with May. She had nothing to recommend her—being old, and ugly, and poor, and using a plainness of speech and manner that was often mistaken for vulgarity—with the exception of a heart as sound as a bell, and an inflexible determination to obey her conscience. The rector, in his bluff open-handed way, had more than once endeavoured to confer upon her some material benefit—and a very little aid would have gone far with one of her small needs—but she had invariably rejected all assistance. 'I wish to be your friend, John,

all my life, and especially your children's friend, and that I cannot be if I become your pensioner.' To this resolve she had steadily kept; but she would probably not have declined the tender aid of the Denham girls in any physical distress. She lived quite alone, at an out-of-the-way village by the sea; and for an instant the thought occurred to Mabel how welcome would such a summons be, if such it were! To be left alone in quiet was what she yearned for; to tend the pillow of a sick friend would be the very occupation to rescue her from her own bitter thoughts. But the next moment she reproached herself for having entertained so selfish a reflection.

"What is it, Ju.?"—what is the matter?" cried she, as she opened the door of their apartment with a haste and suddenness somewhat imprudent, considering that it was the bower of a bride and bridegroom. Her appearance, indeed, was not quite opportune, since Frederick was in the act of removing the recent traces of tears from her sister's cheek by osculation.

"I beg pardon," murmured poor Mabel; "but I was so frightened by what the man told me about the letter."

Frederick had bolted on to the balcony, from whence little explosions of laughter could now be heard. Ju.'s face was crimson, and she looked annoyed, as she replied: "There is nothing to be frightened at; only papa is not quite well, and Dr Bowen has written—"

"Papa ill!" said Mabel, clasping her hands, "and all alone at home! Oh, let me go to him at once."

"No, no," replied Ju., a little sharply; "there is no occasion for that; I would have gone myself if there had been, you may be sure. It is only a passing indisposition; but Dr Bowen says that it is out of the question that he should come to-morrow, as he had intended; and Frederick and I are off on Thursday, so that we shall not be able to wish him good-bye; and that is what made me cry. Papa particularly begs—see, he has written a few lines himself in pencil—that you will not hurry back. He wishes you to finish out your holiday. He says—"

"But, Ju.," interrupted Mabel piteously, "I should be miserable here to think that poor papa is solitary at the vicarage."

"But he is not solitary; Martha Barr is with him, as you can read. No sort of apprehension need be entertained at present, says Dr Bowen; and it is papa's particular wish that you should stay on. He thinks it is suppressed gout, and hopes to have it out by the time you come back, and "to be very cross by that time, as usual." He writes quite cheerfully, you see, and like himself."

"I shall go home," said Mabel decisively, having read the letter.

Julia looked astonished, as well as displeased. She had never known her sister act in opposition to her opinion before, and of course she was ignorant of the other reasons, which, besides her father's illness, were urging May to depart from Shingleton. "I can do nothing with Mabel, Frederick!" exclaimed Julia in discontented tones. "Perhaps you can persuade her."

The obedient Frederick at once made his appearance at the window. "My dear May, I do hope you are not going to run away from us unnecessarily. The governor will be all right in a day or

two; and remember we are leaving England on Thursday for Heaven knows how long. If he were really ill, Ju. and I would be both going to him ourselves, instead of endeavouring to prevent your doing so. As matters are, upon my life I am so selfish as hardly to regret this slight attack, for we wished him good-bye already, before we thought of coming to Shingleton, and Ju. would be so dreadfully upset at parting with him, just as she needs all her strength for her long voyage. There, she has left the room, no doubt to have "a good cry" at the mere thought of it. She needs your company just now, Mabel; indeed, she does, as much as she ever did in her life.

'She has got you,' said May, herself dissolved in tears; 'but papa has got nobody; at least no one to love and nurse him as I could do, though Martha Barr is very good.'

'Listen to me, dear May,' said Frederick tenderly, the sight of her tearful beauty piercing his heart. 'There is another reason why you should stay here, if you will forgive me for speaking about it.'

'Another reason!' May felt that she was growing crimson, though without knowing why, except for a vague thought of Richard.

'You know I am not a man who cares for mere conventionalities,' he continued; 'still, a young lady in your position cannot be too particular, too prudent.' Here the ready Frederick began to stammer. 'I feel you must think me a great fool; it is so difficult to talk of these things; but since Ju. has not made use of the argument, I am obliged to do so. Somebody left Shingleton to-day, unexpectedly. People will chatter, you know. If you were to leave the same day as he, it would look so odd. Ju. and I, of course, know that there is nothing in it; but folks like Mrs Marshall "put two and two together," as they call it, and fancy themselves very wise. Now, don't cry, May, darling, for nobody blames you, or can blame you. It is only your being so pretty and charming, which you can't help.'

She was sobbing now as though her little heart would break; and, perhaps with some vague view of averting that catastrophe, Frederick passed his arm round her dainty waist.

'Of course the man couldn't help falling in love with you, May; every one must do that; and you were quite right to give him his *congé*.'

'But, Frederick, I did not!' exclaimed Mabel with sudden vehemence.

'Well, well, not in words perhaps; but you let him know plainly enough—or else he would not have gone away—that his attentions were distasteful to you. For my part, I should never have forgiven my dear little May, if she had encouraged such a cub.'

'Frederick!' She shook herself free from his tender hold, and regarded him with indignation.

'Why, you don't mean to say he *wasn't* a cub, or to pretend to like him!' answered Frederick; 'and if you did not like him, you would surely not have consented to marry him, though he had ten times ten thousand a year. I think I know my little May better than that.'

The relief to Mabel's mind, upon discovering that it was Horn Winthrop to whom her brother-in-law was alluding, and that her attachment to Richard was still unsuspected, was so great, that she felt quite grateful to Frederick for his mistaken

suspicion. 'Mr Horn Winthrop is nothing to me, dear Fred., nor would he be, even if he had asked to be anything.'

'Thank Heaven for that!' cried Frederick, with an energy that rather contradicted his late confident expressions. 'I felt that no amount of wealth ought to have rendered such a creature acceptable to Mabel Denham, and yet I am overjoyed to hear it from your own lips.' Here he kissed, not them, but her forehead, in an approving brotherly fashion. 'Some people, indeed, like Mrs Marshall, hold that girls will marry anybody for money; and she has put it into your sister's head, as I believe, that the affair is serious. But, for my part, I always said that there was nothing in it; and now we know that there is nothing, let us all be jolly again together, May, and don't go, darling. For my sake, do stay, and—'

'Frederick!'

It was quite another 'Frederick' from that which had left Mabel's lips a minute ago, though that also had been reproachful and indignant.

Mrs Pennant stood at the open door, the handle of which shook in her trembling fingers; her face, always pale, by contrast with her raven hair, quite white with passion; her dark eyes flaming with wrath.

'My dear Julia,' exclaimed Frederick in astonishment, not wholly free from trepidation, 'what is the matter?'

'Oh, nothing,' returned she, with a short bitter laugh—'nothing at all. I daresay it's quite a usual thing to find one's husband with his arm round a young girl's waist, kissing her, and asking her to do something for his sake, which she has refused to do for her own sister's.'

'O dear, O dear!' cried Mabel, wringing her hands. 'How can you say such shocking things, Ju.!'

'I don't blame you, child,' observed Mrs Pennant coldly; 'God forbid I should. It is with my husband only that my quarrel lies, and it is a just one.'

'A just one!' exclaimed Frederick with scornful vehemence. 'You must be mad to call it so! You should be ashamed to speak such words as you have used in the presence of a good and innocent girl.'

'It is of your innocence that I have a doubt, sir, and not of hers,' interrupted Mrs Pennant. 'This is not the first time that your behaviour towards Mabel has given me cause for displeasure; it has been noticed by others also.'

'Then it's that infernal old idiot, Mrs Marshall,' broke in Frederick passionately. 'She has made you as great a fool as herself.'

'You are most kind and courteous, I am sure; but it was not Mrs Marshall's eyes that saw you kiss Mabel a minute ago, or her ears that heard you call her "darling," and tell her her sister's head was turned.'

'O Ju., Ju.!' said Mabel beseechingly; 'indeed you are very wrong, and oh, so cruel to poor Frederick!'

'It would be more becoming, Mabel,' observed Julia sharply, 'if, instead of making excuses for my husband, you were to go to your room.'

'She shall not go to her room,' cried Frederick decisively, 'nor leave us for an instant, until this matter is settled. You are blinded by a devil of jealousy, whom you have raised yourself out of

nothing. You have entertained a shocking and shameful suspicion, for which, when you come to your senses, you will be sorry enough, and I insist on its being retracted. I will say nothing of it as respects Mabel—it would be a wickedness to associate her with a calumny at once so groundless and so base; it is to me, your husband, who swore at the altar scarce a month ago to be faithful to you till death, that you owe an apology. You have wronged and insulted me most infamously, most cruelly; and I insist upon your expressing regret for it.

‘And you—you have nothing to express regret about,’ rejoined Mrs Pennant, but in a tone of less audacity than her words implied; for it was not only plain that her husband was deeply wounded, but also that he believed himself to have been so without cause.

‘I may have something to express regret about,’ answered he coldly, ‘if you contrive to behave in this manner; I may have to acknowledge a mistake committed by myself—to repent an alliance, which’—

‘Frederick! Julia!’ interposed Mabel earnestly. ‘How can you go on like this, when each of you loves the other at heart better than all the world besides! Heaven knows that I am not to blame!’

‘I should think not,’ interpolated Frederick.

‘I never said you were,’ cried Julia, tearful, but still defiant.

‘And yet I seem to myself,’ continued Mabel, ‘to be the mischief-maker between you two. I am very much obliged to you—very—for having asked me here; but O dear, O dear, how I wish I had never come!’

Never was a sentiment more genuine, or wearing a more genuine air. Poor Mabel, as we are aware, had half-a-dozen reasons for regretting her visit to Shingleton besides the present disastrous occurrence, but this fact was unknown to her hearers; and the distress that seemed wholly upon their account moved both exceedingly. ‘I would go away directly, as I wished to go,’ she went on, ‘but that I do not like to leave you on such bad—I mean, while there is any misunderstanding between you. I am but a girl—and a very foolish, ignorant one, no doubt—still, it does seem to me so shocking, so needless’ (here she threw her arms about her sister’s neck). ‘Oh, kiss him, Ju., and make it up; do, pray, just as you and I have often kissed and made up quarrels not more childish!’

Such innocent eloquence was irresistible.

The belligerents did not kiss, indeed, but Frederick held out his hand with frankness, which Julia took and retained in both her own.

‘Forgive me,’ said she; ‘I was to blame for’—

‘There is nothing to forgive, my dear, in an act of folly,’ said he, a little stiffly. ‘One has only to make haste to forget it; besides, it is to Mabel as well as to me’—

‘Kiss her, Fred,’ cried Mabel imperatively; and with a good-natured smile, with which a little curl of contempt in vain endeavoured to mingle, Fred kissed his wife accordingly.

Let us hope that the tiff ended there between them, never to be referred to at certain-lecture or other dangerous domestic season again. Its effects upon Mabel and her fortunes were unhappily destined to be lasting.

It is sad to think what a little cause is sufficient

to separate two poor human souls that have clung to one another for years, and especially if they are female souls. The two sisters did not cease to love one another; but on one side, at all events, the love was henceforth to be of a different sort.

Julia was always ‘glad to hear of dear Mabel’s well-being,’ ‘deeply interested about her,’ ‘and genuinely eager to do’ all she could for her and hers; but the golden bowl of sisterly love was broken by that unhappy jog of the elbow.

She might have forgiven her for having been the innocent occasion of quarrel between herself and Frederick, but she could not forgive her having been the cause of their reconciliation. That her appeal (although Julia had herself been influenced by it) should have brought back her husband’s hand, her husband’s lips to hers, was a thought that never lost its bitterness, and seemed almost to justify the very suspicion which she had confessed to be groundless. She never said this, nor anything like it, in words, nor perhaps even admitted it to herself; but she felt it, and, notwithstanding some effort of concealment, caused others to feel it. It was not her fault. Julia was as sensible and good a wife as could be found within the four seas—it was a sin and a shame, said Mrs Marshall, very justly, to export her to China—but she was a woman.

Nothing more was said concerning this unpleasant matter by anybody; but after dinner that day, when Mabel reopened the question of her return to the rectory, the opposition on her sister’s part was languid and feeble. ‘Perhaps, if dearest May was fretting about dear papa, it would be cruel to keep her. What did Frederick think!’

Frederick, thus appealed to, shrugged his shoulders, and pulled vigorously at his cigar. ‘You had better settle it between you,’ said he presently. What he had been *thinking* in the meantime was something like this: ‘All women are fools’—he meant in one respect, but when one reflects one often generalises—‘and I was a fool to suppose that I had married one who was not. If I press Mabel to stay, there will be another row, or the embers of the old one will be fanned anew. The poor little thing had better go.’

And on the following day, Mabel Denham went home accordingly.

Mabel’s parting with her sister and Fred. was of course a sad one, since it was certain they would not meet again for at least seven years; but it was less poignant by far than, four-and-twenty hours before, she could have possibly expected. She longed to be at home and alone. The old Professor had held her fingers so tight and long at their good-bye, that Fred’s last joke had been that he was offering her his ancient hand to keep for good; but she was scarcely so grateful as Mr Flint’s affection deserved of her. Mrs Marshall had kissed her tumultuously, and blessed her impressively for ‘a good dear girl;’ and she had submitted with a good grace, but without being correspondingly affected. Lastly, Mr Winthrop had come to the station—by accident or design, she knew not which—and bowed his adieus with his usual grace; but they had not disturbed her. Her mind was preoccupied with its own sorrow. These smaller troubles—including even her father’s illness (which, to do her justice, she had been persuaded to think lightly of, and especially since ‘no news’ had arrived from home that morning, which was ‘good

news')—were all dwarfed by the thought of that 'good-bye for ever' she had whispered in her heart but yesterday to Richard, and which was echoing still 'for ever.' How infinitely dearer did he seem, now that he was gone; dearer, too, for that sudden slackness which, she had been unable to hide from herself, had taken place in Julia's affection for her. How she longed for one loving, faithful arm on which to lean! Well, there was at least her father's arm; loving and faithful it had always proved itself; and if it was weakened now, so much the better opportunity was offered to her to support and tend him, and so repay its lifelong care. The bitterness of life was surely past. If it had no more innocent joys to offer her, such as had pleased her once, it had loving duties that would bring their comfort with them.

So she reasoned—innocent, ignorant Mabel; just as some passenger in a train, doomed to disaster, murmurs consolingly: 'This tunnel is dark, but we shall soon get to the end of it'; not knowing of the evil lurking in the darkness, of the catastrophe that is close at hand, and little guessing of the weary hours that will elapse before—bruised, and shattered, and 'another man'—he will once more welcome the light of day.

CLANSHIP AND THE HIGHLANDS.

LIKE almost all human institutions, clanship has not been able to withstand the vicissitudes of time, brought about by the growth of new ideas and customs in the constitution of society. The needs which called it forth have long since passed away, and a new state of things has arisen, incompatible with its existence. Though, indeed, arbitrarily demolished in 1748, it may safely be said, that without this measure it would have later fallen into desuetude. But symbols retain their ground long after the reality they represented has become a myth; the ensign of S.P.Q.R. led the legions to victory when the Republic was but a political fiction. The clansmen and the bards have passed away, the tartans and the piobrachds survive—relics of a power that is gone. Clanship was an institution deeply rooted in the country; the Highlanders yet cherish its traditions with enthusiasm, and lament over its departed glories. No fiery cross blazes from hill to hill, summoning the hundreds of Clan Chattan to follow the Invincible Banner; no lord of the countless Western Isles holds regal sway at Islay; no longer do the chiefs dwell amid their people, served with the homage of a loyal devotion; no longer does each clansman's spot of ground descend for generations from father to son.

The sentiment which lay at the root of clanship, and gave it vitality, was the tie of kinship. This formed a bond stronger than that of a common country, religion, or calling. The chief was the representative of that ancestor from whom every member of the clan, however humble his station, traced his descent. All bore the same name, and the same blood flowed in the veins of all. This feeling of illustrious descent produced that conscious pride and haughty bearing which

distinguished the Highlanders from the Lowland Scotch. But, curiously enough, with this republican feeling of equality of birth existed the most loyal submission to the chief and subordinate leaders of the clan, and a zealous maintenance of their numerous rights and privileges. A regular gradation of rank was preserved. First in dignity came the chief and his family; then the duine-wassals or gentry; next the tacksmen or farmers; lastly, the peasants, who tenanted cottages and small portions of ground on the farms and estates of the gentry.

The houses of the clansmen were very simply constructed. Turf was often used to form the walls, or turf and stone in alternate layers. The building was of an oblong shape, and each end formed an apartment, the centre being filled up with fixed wooden bedsteads and presses. The fire was in the middle of one apartment, and the room was often lighted by the hole in the roof which served as a chimney. Only the houses of the chiefs possessed upper stories. Upon the rafters of the roof were laid divots, that is, thin square pieces of turf. These were covered with heath, arranged in a pattern resembling fish-scales; and this species of roof was said to last a hundred years, if the timber underneath was sufficiently strong. In Argyleshire, ferns were used, but were not nearly so durable, as they required renewal in twelve or fifteen years. Churches were often roofed with heath, a certain quantity being levied from each property. The peasants erected these cottages with their own hands, and discovered that when, through time, they fell to pieces, they formed excellent manure, the turf being impregnated with soot and smoke. In the island of St Kilda, the inhabitants are said to have covered their lands with the ashes and cattle-manure which had accumulated on the floor of their houses during the long and inclement winter.

The manner of laying down compost was remarkable for its cumbrous simplicity. Two semicircular creels or baskets, each about a foot and a half long, were suspended at the sides of a horse, affixed to the saddle by ropes of birch or willow twigs. The bottom of each basket was attached to it by twig hinges at the side next to the horse, and was fastened by sticks slipped into nooses at either end. The compost was spread by simultaneously withdrawing the sticks; but this required some expertness, for if one stick was pulled out before the other, the weight of the remaining side caused the whole apparatus to be instantly overturned.

Another curious agricultural operation was practised in Sutherland and Caithness. The Highlanders observed that if hoar-frost remained on the corn whilst the sun shone upon it, the grain became blighted. They therefore went to the fields before sunrise with a rope made of heath, and a man holding each end pulled it along the top of the corn, that the frost might be shaken off.

A Highland farm generally consisted of part of a valley stretching on either side of the stream by which it was watered. The land was distinguished as infield and outfield—the former term signifying what was under crops, and in good condition, the latter what was not fit for tillage, but serviceable for pasturing cattle, and producing a little hay. Near the house was the 'door-land,' for baiting the horse of a visitor at meal-time. Vegetables were

regarded with aversion by the Highlanders, and not cultivated. The Grants were the first to raise them, and earned the contemptuous epithet from their neighbours of the 'soft kale-eating Grants.' The favourite articles of food were meat and dairy produce. Fresh butter was produced in winter by mixing one pound of salt butter with one quart of milk, and churning it over again until the milk became salt and the butter fresh. Like the Irish, who are described by an old writer as 'very unmannerly in their way of making butter,' the Highlanders had a superstition that it was unlucky to wash the vessels which contained milk. They had many extraordinary methods of curing the diseases of their cattle. That known as 'raising the need-fire' was supposed to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. Certain persons, adepts in the art, erected a circular booth of stone or turf near a river or lake. By means of a movable pole inside, rapidly turned by two men, whilst others thrust wedges against another beam so as to produce friction, sparks of fire were ignited. The need-fire being thus produced, all other fires were extinguished, and relighted from it. They were then considered sacred, and the cattle were brought to inhale the smoke, as a cure.

The remedial measures applied to human maladies were no less curious. Mr Shaw informs us that the celebrated Duncan Shaw of Crathinard was a pining infant. A gipsy woman gave his parents a prescription, for which she was to receive a cheese if unsuccessful, a cow if the cure was effected. Her directions were to prepare a boiling pot of crushed ants, through the vapour of which the child was to be passed several times a day, with a blanket wrapped round him. Doubtless the vapour, not the ants, was the beneficial agent in this case. Later, we find remedies equally extraordinary. In 1740, Margaret Collie, wife of Alexander Grant, was imprisoned by the fourth baronet of Gordonston, for taking the head of a ling out of a 'midden' or dunghill. This she believed to be a cure for the gout. 'Dr Clark's' prescription to Sir Robert Gordon's son, Edinburgh, May 20, 1739, is as follows: 'Give him twice a day the juice of twenty slettars,* squeezed through a muslin rag, in whey. To be continued while he has any remains of the cough.'

The dignity of the chief was marked by the rude plenty which abounded in his household, and by his large retinue of followers. The office and perquisites of each are detailed by many writers, but the enumeration would prove tedious to the general reader. '*Cean uia' na dai*' (the point to which all the roads of the strangers lead) was an old epithet for the chieftain's house. It is said that there is but one term in Gaelic for a landowner and a hospitable man. The Macswineys of Clodach Castle had a stone placed by the neighbouring highway, inviting all strangers to lodge at their house. It was overturned by one of the family, probably by design. On account of this deed, it was said he never afterwards prospered. One of the recruits of a troop raised by Fraser (Lord Lovat) in 1725, thus describes the breakfasts at this chieftain's residence: 'His lordship rose between five and six, when all the doors and windows were immediately thrown open. The lairds sat at the head of the first table, and drank

claret with the host. At the second table were the duine-wassals, who had whisky-punch; then the tenants, who were served with ale. Outside, the clansmen, who regaled themselves with bread and onions, or cheese and beer. "Cousins," said Lovat to the second class, "I told the servants to hand you wine, but they tell me ye like punch best." To the tenants: "Gentlemen, there is what ye please at your service; but I send you ale, as I know ye prefer it." This courtesy, it is added, was necessary to preserve the company in good humour. Among the Western Islanders, the guest and host did not separate until the provisions in the house were finished; they then went to the next residence, and so on, until they had made a complete round, the head of the family in which they were last entertained always going with them on the succeeding visit. Like the ancients, the Highlanders regarded the duties of hospitality as sacred and inviolable. Lamont of Cowal killed the only son of Macgregor of Glenstrae. Being hotly pursued, he took refuge unwittingly in the house of the father, and begged to be allowed to conceal himself. The old man granted his request, but afterwards discovered that he was the murderer of his son. Nevertheless, he afforded him an asylum, and aided his escape through the night.

It was beneath the dignity of a chief to barter or sell. In illustration of this, we quote the following anecdote from the Rev. Mr Shaw: 'Alister Shaw of Inchroary was famous for his breed of staghounds; and the then Lord Fife having become desirous of possessing a dog of that particular breed, made overtures to Inchroary, through his factor, for the purchase of one. "Sell my dog!" said Inchroary to the factor. "Does Lord Fife think I would sell my dog? Tell him I would as soon sell my wife." In those days, it would have been considered equally mercenary for a gentleman to sell his game; but times are changed. It was not long before a gillie made his appearance at Lord Fife's shooting-lodge, with Inchroary's compliments, and a dog for his lordship.'

But it does not appear that the nobility shared this feeling in later times. Captain Dunbar informs us in his interesting work that Viscount Tarbat, afterwards Earl of Cromartie and Lord Justice-general of Scotland, set up a bottle-manufactory, in August 1688, at North Leith. He was in partnership with two merchants—a druggist and a glass-maker. The undertaking lasted many years. A 'noate of the profite' shews that they made L.19, 19s. weekly. It gives the expenses on both sides. The bottles were sold at 3d. each; the house-rent was 10s. weekly; the 'pott drink, 1s.;' 'candles and stro for pakeing glass, 1s.' We suppose this is Scotch money. Captain Dunbar also gives us the following curious advertisement from an Edinburgh paper of 1760: 'An Infalible Mixture for effectually destroying that abominable vermin called the Bugs, which was purchased by a Gentleman of distinction for a considerable sum of money, upon his travels in foreign parts, from

* One of the wood-louse tribe.

* The Rev. Mr Shaw has, with great industry and zeal, collected all particulars relating to the history and traditions of his clan. We trust that he may hereafter embody his extensive antiquarian knowledge of Highland subjects in a volume of general interest.

a Jesuit; which, if rightly applied, will undoubtedly cleanse the country of that noxious vermin, with the whole sediment of them, is to be had by applying to Lady Murray, at her calender house in Weir's Close in the Canongate, who will shew the performance of the same. This secret and infallible mixture is sold at 7s. each Scotch pint; and if it do not prove effectual, they shall pay nothing for it. No less quantity than a mutchkin is to be sold.'

Returning to the chiefs, we may observe that 'creaghs'—forays for obtaining cattle—were not considered derogatory. When the cattle were driven through an estate on the way home, its owner was entitled to claim a share, called 'a road collop.' The Lowlanders had a saying that 'the Highland lairds counted out the 'tocher' [dowry] of their daughters by the light of the Michaelmas moon'—that is, they 'lifted' cattle for them. A rich maiden had from ten to forty; two were considered a decent portion. 'Cattle-lifters' were known in the Highlands by the sounding name of 'gentlemen-drovers.'

Nevertheless, dishonesty was held in abhorrence. Bankrupts were forced to wear a party-coloured, patched garment, and hose of different sets, as a mark of disgrace. In business, receipts were often never given, as it was considered a want of trust either to demand or to offer one. General Stewart relates the following anecdote concerning a Highlander who kept a petty retail shop for nearly fifty years, and supplied all the surrounding district. He collected his dues regularly at Martinmas. On one occasion, finding a customer from home, he returned unpaid. The next morning, before he rose, he was awakened by a call from his debtor, who paid his account, adding: 'I would not for my best cow that I should sleep while you wanted your money, and that I should be the last in the country in your debt.' Duncan Shaw of Crathinard, who is said to have originated the 'Falkirk Trysts,' did business one time as a cattle-drover. He appeared once at Falkirk, in 1710, with a large drove of cattle, a number of which he was commissioned by neighbours to sell. An Englishman, apparently wealthy, offered to purchase the whole. The bargain was concluded, and the animals driven away; but the purchaser also disappeared, without paying. Shaw, on his return, sold Crathinard to Farquharson of Invercauld, and repaid his neighbours what they would have received, as well as his own creditors, of whom he had purchased part of the cattle. He then took a lease of Cranthard, in Glenisla, from the Earl of Airlie, and transported his numerous family thither, some on horseback, and the children in baskets slung on ponies, their usual mode of conveyance in those days. Six years afterwards, he encountered his customer at a market in Forfar. The delinquent professed great penitence, paid his old debt, and purchased Shaw's present stock, for which he gave ready money. Shaw treated his retainers so liberally upon this occasion, that it became a proverb to say, when there was a good market, that 'there had not been one like it since the time when Duncan's men drank their bickerfuls of claret.'

The scarcity of money was formerly so great, not only in the Highlands, but through all Scotland, that statutes were passed forbidding its exportation. The northern burghs were often also

in an impoverished condition. They had to bear the expenses of sending a commissioner to parliament, and the taxes levied were generally more than they could pay, so that they were under the necessity of having soldiers quartered upon them. Bailie Alves reported of Dingwall, in 1733, that there was no trade, but one or two were willing to carry on business. Mr Fraser-Mackintosh gives a petition from the magistrates of Fortrose, presented to the parliament in 1704, praying against quarterings, on account of their 'pretended cess' (tax) of L.630 odd Scots. Three reasons are adduced. First, the tax itself is disputed; secondly, it is argued that, if it could be reclaimed, 'the present magistrates are not liable, because the same did not fall due in their time, and the magistrates and their collector that was then in office are all dead, except one of the old bailies, who lives upon the town's charity.' Thirdly, 'such is the poverty, want of trade and law, and deplorable condition of the said burgh, that there has been a resignation made of the privileges thereof both in parliament and in the conventions of the royal burghs, and the resignations are lying in the clerk's hands of these royal burghs.'

Although the chief families possessed numerous manuscripts, many of great antiquity, printed books appear to have been little, if at all, sold in the country, and possessed by few. In 1633, there was no bookseller in the north. A 'Catolloge of Buiks' is extant, 'to be coft' [purchased] 'at London for Mr John Gray, minister of Dornoch,' by Sir Robert Gordon. Imprimis, Cotton's Concordance in Ingleise, according to the King's Translation of the finest letter. Item, Jackson on the Parabils of the Gospell. Item, Smith on the Twentieth-ane Spalme. Item, Waire's Sermones. Item, Doctor Herpher on the Hundriith and nyntein Spalme. Item, Playfer his Sermones. Item, Hary's Sermones. The best lait writter on the Hystorie of the Church, either Ingleise or German.

An inventory of the household furniture and stock of Bailie James Dunbar, a wealthy merchant of Inverness, taken in 1704, shews that he possessed only two books—two volumes of Commentaries upon the Scripture, and Burgess on the First of Corinthians.

Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty claimed for his race an antiquity nearly equal to that asserted in the celebrated boast of the Macpherson. He caused a tract to be drawn up and printed, entitled, *Fantichronachan, or a Pedigree of the Name of Urquhart of Cromarty, from the Creation of the World until the present year of Christ, 1652*. It was reprinted in 1772. According to this book, the fifteenth chief was named Esonnon, and lived 1810 A.M. He was surnamed Urocharos, that is, fortunate and well-beloved, by his Greek subjects. His coat of arms is described. The thirty-seventh Urquhart, Pamprosodos, married Termuth, that Egyptian princess who discovered Moses. Sir Thomas likewise informs us that Castle Urquhart was founded 554 B.C. This is a fortress of great antiquity, and was a stronghold of importance. There is a tradition that it contains a secret vault filled with treasure. But this cannot be sought for, because there is another vault in which is confined a deadly pestilence, and were this fatal chamber opened, the searcher would fall a victim to his curiosity, and the country would be depopulated.

Very interesting glimpses of social life are afforded by the works of Mr Fraser-Mackintosh and Mr Dunbar. These gentlemen have followed the excellent plan of giving the papers they have discovered *in extenso*, only adding such comments and additional matter as may suffice to heighten their interest, and render them intelligible. By this method, many curious traits are incidentally touched upon, which might not find place in less discursive works. Thus, in speaking of the old houses of Inverness, Mr Fraser-Mackintosh informs us that one in Church Street, the property of Lady Mackintosh, was, in 1746, the only house in Inverness which had a reception-room without a bed in it. He also adds a specimen of the accounts kept by Prince Charles Edward's steward, the Prince having occupied the house shortly before the battle of Culloden. We extract a few items:

		L.	s.	d.
1746. March 3.	To extinguishing a chimney on fire, and cleaning it.....	0	2	0
30th.	To a Salmon.....	0	2	4
	To a coloured Pigge.....	0	3	0
Ap. 7th.	To a gown and petticoat to ye citchen girle....	0	13	5

'Ye citchen girle' appears to have been more liberally paid than other servants mentioned, whose gratuities do not severally exceed 3s. each. 'A coloured pigge' means some article of china-ware; 'pig' being, in Scotland at present, the usual appellation among the lower classes for all earthenware articles. Probably, it is derived from the word porcelain.

From Mr Dunbar we take the following order for dress. The letter was written by Anna, daughter of the fourth Lord Elphinstone, and widow of John, thirteenth Earl of Sutherland:

To my Richt Traist freind JOHN HUNTER, tailor and burgess of Edinburgh.—These.

DUNROBIN, 26 Feb. 1616.

TRAIST FREIND—My heartlie commendationes remembered. Ye sall tak the panes to gang to annie merchanthe within the towne, and tak off als meikill black Ryssilis [a fabric made at Lisle, of which city the Teutonic name is Ryssel] as wil be ane doublet and skirt unto me, whilk ye sall mak and furnishe yourself, and be cairfull ye mack of the newest faissone that is usit. Ye sall adverteiss me with the next occasione of the pryces thereof, and I sall send you siluer for the samen; and, how soone it is ready, ye sall delyver the samen to my sister, my Lady forbes, whome I haif wrettin to for to receave the samen. Ye sall lykways send me als meikle perpetuona as wil be ane gounde to my dochter Elizabeth, whilk, I think, sall be aucht or nyn elns, that be verie fyn, and of ane good licht culor, with pesments and buthones sutable therto, with silk, and adverteiss me of the newest faissone, that I may caus mack the samen, and after ye adverteiss me of the pryces of the haille I sall send siluer unto you. Is haifing no forder at this present, bot expects ye will obey thir presents I commit you to God's protection, and rests your assured good freind—

ANNAS. C. SUTHERLAND.

We trust that we have said enough to shew that such works as those to which we have alluded are not without result in vividly bringing before us the

social life of the past. Honour is due to all who, with pen or pencil, aid in preserving from oblivion those particulars, which, unimportant in themselves, give to the page of history the touch of life.

MY VENGEANCE.

I ALWAYS get my bit o' mid-day sustenance at the opposition shop now—Absalom J. Runt's—for I ain't been to Slobbs's for months. If you'd like ter know why, wal, or whether or no, I'll tell you. It's because some of our boys have mortlly grand idee of Derringers and Bowies, and they don't take kyindly yet to the sheriff and the committee of vigilance. We're a rising city, though, at West Paraira; and what we shall be in a few years there ain't no tellin' at all, but it'll be a sight, stranger; and if you of the rotten old country don't gnaw your teeth with envy, why, my name ain't Hiram.

You see the great P'cific line goes through us clean, and we've been risin' ever since it started. There ain't a city out west with more bars where you can have a smile or a morning painter; if there is, tell me on it. Then see what institutions we've got rising fast, from Nathan D. Anson's store, right down to the Paraira Solid Milk and Butter Company in Cross Street, number ten under an' eight. Slobbs's is in Cross Street, number nine, as p'raps you know; Absalom J. Runt's is in Straight Street, and there's a mortal enmity between them two. It's the steam does it, I think.

I left off going to Slobbs's because I thought it was good for me, bein' a very mild, inoffensive sort of a fellow. You see there was a waiter at Slobbs's as had a sort of spite agen me, and he'd always give me the worst cuts of the beef and the fattest of the mutton; while as to gravy, I got more gravy at Runt's in one day than them Slobbses let me have in a week. Then I allus had the wettest salt and the stalest bread, and the dirtiest bit of the tablecloth; and if there was a knife as had broke loose and turned round in the haft, that knife was put for me.

We didn't like one another—me and the waiter didn't—and we got more and more enemies every day, till I see very plain as there must be a bust soon. I kep' it in, though, for I thought as something might turn up, so as to let me serve Mr Waiter out by depitty.

There was another thing, too, as I didn't like at Slobbs's, only it wasn't a thing, it was a great ugly customer as always sot on me—mettyphorically, of course, I mean; for he was allus mocking like of my humble ways; and if ever I ordered my glass of anythink, he'd roar instanter for the waiter, and call for a bottle. He made hisself very unpleasant to me, he did, and snubbed me on politicks more than a few; but I let it all wait. I saved it up, as you may suppose, thinking how much I should like to have it out with him; but I never seemed to get no chance till about a week after Slobbses came out strong with a new set of J. Puddick's Alabama 'Lecter Plate, warranted to wear better than solid silver. Them spoons and forks just did shine so as it seemed a pity to put 'em in the soup, or to get 'em greasy, for you could see your face in 'em, so as you never got tired of vooving the expression of your features.

But even the sight o' them spoons didn't settle

me, and I wasn't going to be tempted into stopping, when Runt's had their doors open to have me, and there was gravy and welkum.

This citizen as allus sot on me was washed in with the name of Shimei—Shimei B. Parsons was his total—and his people made some cuss of a mistake or another over his name, I bet, or else they'd never ha' took to this one.

We got to the climax at last, we did; and I left without a word, after serving 'em both out pleasant-like. It was like this. I'd had a bit of the toughest old steak I ever did stick teeth in since I chawed caoutchouc at school, and got leathured for it; and after I'd been puzzling my teeth with that bit o' steak for half an hour, who should come in but Shimei; and the fust thing he does is to hang his greatcoat over the rail where I was sitting, knock down my felt hat, and then laugh, fleering-like, at me. I never says nothing; but that there was tougher than the steak, and I couldn't swaller it a bit; but there I sits with that coat touching of me, and the waiter half-grinning at me to see me so uncomfortable. 'I reckon I'd like to chaw the couple on yer up,' I thinks to myself; and then, somehow, while I was a-balancin' one of J. Puddick's Alabama 'Lecterer Plate Spoons on my finger, I let it slip into one o' my friend opposite's coat-pockets; when, thinking as the poor thing might be cold all alone there by itself, I slips in another, to keep it company. 'I shouldn't wonder if that there coat was to hang lop-sided after that,' thinks I to myself; and while my neighbour was a-running his eye down the columns of the *West Paraira Triboon*, I just slips a couple of forks into the other pocket, and then waits a little while till my fren' the waiter condescends to take the bill; after which I waits a bit longer for decency sake, and then I gets up to go.

I finds my fren' the waiter just outside the swing-doors, lookin' at me very soopercilys like, and I says to him: 'Nice sorter gent that in box No. 7.'

'Very,' he says shortly.

'Very true,' I says. 'Them's a nice set of J. Puddick's Alabama 'Lecterer Plate, too.'

'Yes,' he says, looking at me quite curus, as much as to say: 'What's up the tree now?'

'Shall you charge them forks and spoons in his bill?' I says.

'Charge what forks and spoons in whose bill?' he says, savage-like.

'Oh, I don't know—don't ask me,' I says; 'only I thought he might pay for them as is in his pocket.'

I knowed what he'd do as well as could be, and I stopped outside that swing glass-door, peeping and listening.

First thing my fren' the waiter does is to swing his hand by accident up against the coat-pocket, and then I see him jump; when he goes straight up to the owner of that there coat, and he says quite fierce and loud, so as everybody began to look: 'This won't do, you, sir!'

'What won't do?' says the other.

'This,' says the waiter; and he puts his hand in the pocket on one side of the coat, and brings out two J. Puddick's. Then he does the same on the other side, and lays all four on the table; when, without a word, the gent leaps up, throws out one of his arms sudden, as if he wanted to get rid of it, and the waiter being right in the way, it hit him on his nose, and down he went, but only to

come up again like so much indy-rubber; when at it he goes, and catches my other fren' wherever he could hit; and for about five minutes, they were at it hard, till them as looked on thought it time to pull 'em away from one another, for fear there shouldn't be no waiter left, nor no reglar customer for him to wait on; and then I come away.

You see that was doing it fillersophickly. I wanted to larrup the waiter for stopping my gravy, and giving me sarse instead; and I wanted to larrup my stout friend for sitting on me; and I reckon I did it butifal, without so much as taking a bit o' skin off my knuckles. But I ain't, as I said afore, been to Slobbs's since.

RECOMPENSE.

In Spring, two robins from the warmer lands

Built a nest upon an unsafe limb

Of the tall tree that by my window stands,

And every morn they praised God with a hymn,

And when a certain season passed away,

Five light-green eggs within the building lay.

Above the rush and clatter of the street,

Devotedly was guarded each green trust,

And the round house was an abode most sweet,

Roofed with awaiting wings. Better to rust

With iron patience than forego a hope,

And pent life in the shells was felt to grope.

But one dread day, before the sun went down,

A cloud arose, a black and monstrous hand,

That robbed the sunset of its golden crown.

A windy shudder shook the frightened land.

The portals of the storm were opened wide,

And pealing thunder rolled on every side.

Then was it some unchained malicious gust

Troubled the spray whereon the nest was made,

And to the ground the soft-floored dwelling thrust,

And wrecked its hapless store. The birds, dismayed,

Shrilled their unusual grief, and beat the air

With wings whose very whir was like despair.

At dawn, my neighbours, living o'er the way,

Sent me the whisper that their babe was dead;

And when they led me where the body lay—

The free, winged spirit's shell, untimely shed—

And the wild cries of their distress I heard,

I thought with pity of each parent bird.

Yet grief is but a cloud that soon is past;

For there the mated robins came once more,

And built again a nest, compact, and fast

Upon the tree that grows before my door;

And in it, from the window, could be seen

Five sources of sweet music, new and clean.

Time passed, and to the good home opposite

Another babe was born, and all the love

That was bereft that fierce and stormy night,

Fell to the latter child as from above;

And in the nest five yellow mouths one day,

Of their impatient hunger made display.

We love our dead, and hold their memories dear;

But living love is sweeter than regret.

God's ways are just, and though they seem severe,

He can give back with blessings greater yet

Than we have lost. He chastens for some good,

That in our weakness is not understood.

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